

# In the event of a mass disaster,

## Regional Readiness for a Mass Disaster

health care services and hospital emergency departments would likely be overwhelmed without a uniform response system in place. Fortunately, southeast Michigan is preparing for such an event through the efforts of the Region 2 South Medical Bio-Defense Network (R2S).

Established in 2002 by the state of Michigan and federal funding, R2S is an emergency preparedness coalition of health care professionals, emergency managers, police and fire departments, hospitals, the city of Detroit and county health departments, and Emergency Medical Services (EMS) serving Wayne, Washtenaw, and Monroe counties. Its mission is to provide a synchronized health care response in the event of a disaster by assisting in the coordination, allocation, and augmentation of existing resources.

In preparation for any large scale disaster, R2S, under the direction of either local or state emergency management and in conjunction with the state of Michigan, has adopted the Modular Emergency Medical System (MEMS). This will ensure medical care and emergency response are as effective and efficient as possible. MEMS was developed by an expert team of more than 60 local, state, and federal agencies.

**Any questions or concerns,  
please contact Region 2 South at  
(734) 727-8001 or [www.2south.org](http://www.2south.org)**



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Terrorist attack      Disabled      Alert  
Family support      Disease control  
Local Government      Biological attack  
Alternate Care Center      Treatment  
Fire      Command center  
Chemical attack      Pediatric      Nurses  
Adult      Field house  
Mass destruction      ER      Fire  
Life support      Trauma      Casualties  
Friends      Community Outreach  
Hospitals      Gymnasium      Police Patients  
Critical care      Public Information  
Emergency Operation Center  
Response      Remain Calm  
Neighborhood Emergency Help Center  
Communication  
Alternate Care Center      Burn

# Will YOU know what to do when a disaster occurs?

## Region 2 South plan for health care management in the midst of a disaster

**MEMS**

### The Modular Emergency Medical System (MEMS)

The medical and government emergency managers in Region 2 South (R2S) will use the MEMS to increase the capacity of the existing medical infrastructure, facilitate the coordination of medical care among hospitals, and enhance the overall coordination of response and recovery efforts. Upon activation of the MEMS, R2S will open its regional Medical Coordination Center (MCC) to provide coordination among hospital resources. The MCC will provide support to the local government Emergency Operations Centers (EOCs) and is designed to be a medical resource to local emergency managers. R2S has a permanent MCC in Wayne County and a mobile MCC that can, if necessary, be placed close to the area affected by a disaster.

If a large-scale disaster occurs, the first need is to ensure individuals receive the proper medical attention and to alleviate overflow at local hospital emergency departments. Using the MEMS model, responders will rapidly organize two types of expandable patient care centers:

- A Neighborhood Emergency Help Center (NEHC) serves as an entry point into the health care system where basic triage, medical evaluation, limited treatment, community outreach and mass vaccinations may be provided, if available.
- An Alternate/Acute Care Center (ACC) that is similar to a mobile hospital will provide limited care for patients/casualties who need inpatient treatment but do not require mechanical ventilation.

Local health departments will lead the operation of Neighborhood Emergency Help Centers (NEHCs) in their jurisdictions. There are four public health departments in the R2S area; one department in each of the three counties and the city of Detroit. Pre-determined hospitals will manage the operation of ACCs in their areas with assistance from the MCC.

## Care Centers

### The Neighborhood Emergency Help Center (NEHC)

The Neighborhood Emergency Help Center is the primary entry point into the medical care system for individuals seeking care as a direct result of the disaster and for the "worried well" who do not require medical assistance but may need counseling or other information.

Health care officials have developed a list of possible locations for an NEHC. The specific locations chosen will depend on the nature and proximity to the site of a large scale disaster. Local government and health officials will alert the public of the NEHC location(s) through a multifaceted communications outreach program.

Upon arrival at an NEHC site, the staff will evaluate injured and/or ill individuals, and then direct them to the proper health care facility (e.g., hospital, alternative care center, etc.) for treatment.

Other functions and resources, if available, that will be conducted in an NEHC include:

- Basic first aid
- Patient education
- Counseling and mental health services
- Mass vaccinations, if needed
- Self-help information and instruction (which will also be distributed by the media and other communication vehicles)

If a patient needs to be sent to an ACC or hospital for further medical care, stabilization and transportation will be provided by ambulance services that will be coordinated by the local government Emergency Operation Centers (EOC). Once MEMS is activated, the local government EOC will coordinate with local emergency medical service providers and private providers to transport patients among hospitals, ACCs, and NEHCs. They also will transport non-critical patients out of the community to free up bed space in local hospitals.

#### What if mass vaccinations are needed?

In the event a mass vaccination is needed for the general population, NEHC sites and additional sites, known as Dispensing Sites, will be activated. Those sites would be broadcast throughout the region through a variety of communication vehicles.

#### How will patients know where to go in the midst of a disaster?

Hospital, public health department, and local government information officers will distribute information quickly to the public through the media, flyers, phone, web sites, etc. The following are the daily operational, 24-hour contact numbers for the health departments in Region 2 South. In the event of a disaster, additional phone banks may be established to facilitate enhanced communication with the public.

Wayne County Health Department: (734) 727-7284 • [www.waynecounty.com](http://www.waynecounty.com)

Washtenaw County Health Department: (734) 891-4327 • [www.ewashtenaw.org](http://www.ewashtenaw.org)

Monroe County Health Department: (734) 243-7070 • [www.co.monroe.mi.us/publichealth](http://www.co.monroe.mi.us/publichealth)

Detroit Health and Wellness Promotion Department: (313) 876-4100 • [www.dethhealth.org](http://www.dethhealth.org)

### Alternate Care Center (ACC)

After initial triage is done at the NEHC, individuals who require inpatient treatment that is not considered critical will be treated at an ACC. ACC staff will provide patients with ongoing, supportive care such as antibiotic therapy, hydration, and pain management. The ACCs will NOT be able to provide intubation or ventilator support. Patients who need advanced treatment in intensive or critical care units will be prioritized immediately for hospital admission, if available.

In crisis situations, even additional health care resources such as ACCs can quickly become overburdened. It is important to note that in a mass disaster, especially involving an infectious disease outbreak, residents who do not need serious medical care will be encouraged to stay at home to avoid potential infection. This will allow the medical professionals at the ACC to accommodate the needs of those who have more serious medical conditions. Only those patients with a serious condition needing inpatient treatment will be directed to an ACC or hospital for further medical care.

Various locations in the counties of Monroe, Washtenaw, and Wayne will be pre-selected as possible sites. An ACC is usually located within a school gymnasium, community field house, large cafeteria or in an area of a health care facility.

**Who will staff these centers? How will you get the personnel you need?**  
Public health nurses, physicians, physician assistants, emergency medical technicians, paramedics as well as non-emergency medical care professionals will staff these centers. Many of these professionals are or will be volunteers. Numerous health care workers have already been pre-selected and trained in emergency response.

There is an ongoing need for more health care volunteers and other non-medical professionals to sign up on the **Michigan Volunteer Registry web site** ([www.mivolunteerregistry.org](http://www.mivolunteerregistry.org)). This registry is being used to recruit, pre-register and credential health care workers and others in advance of a disaster and will be used to notify these volunteers should an incident occur. It is maintained by the Michigan Department of Community Health, Office of Public Health Preparedness.

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Will you know what to do?